

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Cancel claim 2 without prejudice;

Rewrite claims 1, 3, 4 and 12 as follows; and

Add the following new claim 18:

1. (Currently Amended) A rotary printing machine comprising a pair of sheet holding and transfer systems disposed in side-by-side relation for transferring sheets in the printing machine, said sheet holding and transfer systems defining a sheet transfer area ~~therebetween~~ at a tangential point between said sheet holding and transfer systems, a sheet guide apparatus disposed underneath said transfer area, said sheet guide apparatus including a sheet guide which defines a guide surface for guiding movement of sheets adjacent said transfer area, said sheet guide including a comb shaped end with spaced apart guide fingers adjacent said transfer area, a first pneumatic system for directing air in said sheet guide and through said guide surface for guiding sheet movement along said guide surface, and a second separate pneumatic system operable for blowing an air stream over an external end of said ~~sheet guide comb and into spaces between said guide fingers and~~ toward said transfer area to facilitate reliable transfer of sheets between said sheet holding and transfer systems.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The printing machine of claim ~~2~~ 1 in which said sheet holding and transfer systems comprise a pair of sheet carrying cylinders.

4. (Currently Amended) The printing machine of claim ~~2~~ 1 in which said sheet transfer and holding systems comprise one sheet-carrying cylinder and a circulating conveyor system.

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